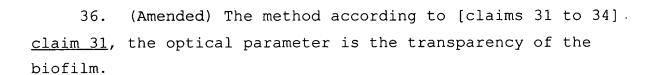
## VERSION WITH MARKINGS SHOWING CHANGES MADE

- 6. (Amended) The apparatus according to [claims 2 and 3] claim 2, wherein the detecting means comprise at least the conduit portion, which is transparent to allow a direct visual check, and feed means for introducing a reagent or coloring fluid connected to, and acting on, the transparent conduit portion.
- 10. (Amended) The apparatus according to [claims 1 to 3] claim 1, wherein the detecting means comprise optical means located and operating at the transparent conduit portion and designed to emit a light beam before and after the reagent or coloring fluid is introduced so as to reveal a change in the color and/or transparency of the biofilm at least inside the conduit portion.
- 13. (Amended) The apparatus according to [claims 1, 2 and 4] <a href="claim 1">claim 1</a>, wherein the detecting means comprise means for detecting electrical parameters and in that the reagent substance is an electrolyte.
- 16. (Amended) The apparatus according to [claims 14 and 15] claim 14, wherein the sensor is connected to a corresponding control unit for reading, comparing and checking the electrical parameter detected; the control unit being in turn connected to alerting means activated by the control unit itself through a signal generated by the control unit when the value of the reading differs from the preset reference value.
- 17. (Amended) The apparatus according to [claims 12 and 16] claim 12, wherein the alerting means consist of an audible warning device.
- 18. (Amended) The apparatus according to [claims 12 and 16] claim 12, wherein the alerting means consist of a warning light device.

- 19. (Amended) The apparatus according to [claims 12 and 16] claim 12, wherein the alerting means consist of an alphanumeric display unit to display the value of the reading.
- 20. (Amended) The apparatus according to [claims 12 and 16] claim 12, wherein the alerting means consist of an alphanumeric display unit to display a reference message corresponding to the result of the reading.
- 22. (Amended) The apparatus according to [any of the foregoing claims] claim 1, wherein the conduit portion forms an extension of one of the conduits that supply the handpieces and is equipped with an independent drain.
- 23. (Amended) The apparatus according to [any of the foregoing claims] <u>claim 1</u>, wherein the conduit portion is a part of a conduit that supplies one of the handpieces.
- 25. (Amended) The apparatus according to [claims 5 and 24] claim 5, wherein the sample elements are housed in a container fitted inside the conduit portion in such a way as to permit the operating fluid to flow normally through the dental unit.
- 33. (Amended) The method according to [claims 30 to 33] claim 30, wherein the detecting step consists in observing the optical parameter which is visually perceptible.
- 34. (Amended) The method according to [claims 30 to 33] claim 30, wherein the detecting step consists in measuring the optical parameter.
- 35. (Amended) The method according to [claims 31 to 34] claim 31, wherein the optical parameter is at least the coloring of the biofilm.



39. (Amended) The method according to [claims 37 and 38] <a href="claim 37">claim 37</a>, wherein the detecting step comprises a step of measuring electrical parameters.